

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

Voluntary - Public

Date: 9/16/2009

GAIN Report Number: IT9024

Italy

Post: Rome

Agricultural News for Italy and the EU - August 09

Report Categories:

Agriculture in the News

Approved By:

Jim Dever

Prepared By:

Dana Biasetti

Report Highlights:

Italian Agricultural News

Brunello Investigation Results Released

The Italian Magistrate and the Guardia di Finanza (Italian Treasury Department) following the Brunello di Montalcino wine investigation have finally released information pertaining to the case in which five wineries and millions of liters of Brunello and other wines have been declassified. For latest Post reporting on the issue, please see IT9020 - Italian Authorities release details on the Brunello wine investigation.

Seized GMO oil

As part of the "zero tolerance regime" promoted by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture against adulterated and fake foods, the ICQ (Central Food and Agriculture Inspectorate) recently seized 11,242 liters of soybean oil produced with GMO soybeans.

Italian maize fears over pesticide ban

Italian maize growers are upset with Minister of Agriculture Zaia's decision to ban the use of neonicotinoids pesticides on maize crops in order to protect the dying bee population. According to the Italian farmers' union Confagricoltura,

some 7,000 maize producers in northern Italy stand to lose 30 percent of their crop as a result of the pesticide ban.

Chianti Classico to cut sales - Reduction in market supply aimed at stabilizing prices

The Chianti Classico Consortium has decided to limit their wine output on the market in order to stabilize prices. Prices for upscale wines have been falling due to a drop in demand linked to the current global recession. The Chianti Classico consortium decision to limit the amount of its wine it will bottle for sale will be for a two year period.

EU Agricultural News

Traces of unauthorized GM maize halt EU soy imports from U.S.

A number of EU importers have placed a voluntary stop on imports of U.S. soy after shipments were found containing traces of genetically modified maize. Initial reports indicate that consignments of soy meal containing some GMO maize varieties which have not been authorized for use in the EU had been found in Spain and Germany. Imports are reported to have been halted while the situation is investigated, although European trade sources deny that the situation is to be considered a ban or an organized embargo.

United Kingdom calls on the EU to reduce zero tolerance policy on GM soy

The UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has called on the EU to relax its zero tolerance policy towards genetically modified soy, following warnings from farmers that they could soon find themselves unable to import non-GMO animal feed. The National Farmers Union (NFU) in England, Scotland and Wales, the Ulster Farmers Union and the National Pig Association all warn that the UK could see feed costs rise by £30 million pounds per annum if the EU does not relax the rules. Under the current regulations, even if very low levels of non-approved GMO material is detected within a shipment of animal feed arriving into the EU, the cargo will be rejected. Livestock production relies on the use of imported feed, especially soy, mainly from GMO-producing countries.

Non-food GMO crops need 'confinement'

According to a new scientific opinion from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) "confinement" measures are crucial to safeguard production of GMO plants not intended for human or animal consumption. EFSA is looking into how to assess the safety of non-food/non-feed GMOs as more new biotech varieties are produced. EFSA's GMO Panel has called for provisional data in response to risks associated to the accidental intake from GMO crops released into the environment that are not intended for human consumption. EFSA believes that narrowing the geographical area for which authorization is requested could help prove the safety of the product.

EU highlights U.S. non-tariff barriers to trade

A new report from the European Commission has taken issue with a host of 'non-tariff barriers' within the U.S. market which are said to limit export possibilities for EU dairy farmers, winemakers and others. The Commission report focuses on both long-standing and new emerging trade barriers which EU exporters feel deny them parity with U.S. produce on American markets. Being the largest bilateral trading partnership in the world, smooth trade flows between the EU and U.S. is considered to be of vital importance.

Greek peach protesters get aid

Greek Minister of Agriculture Hatzigakis has announced a peach aid package for the country's producers following several days of street protests demanding compensation for more than 200,000 tons of surplus peach production.

French fruit & veg farmers must pay back illegal EU aid

France is being asked to pay back millions of Euros in fruit and vegetable subsidies after an EU ruling determined that the aid was illegal. The EU determined that France must recoup €330 million Euros in aid paid out between 1992 and 2002 to support producer prices and income.

FAS Rome Office Reports

IT9019 - Former Italian Minister of Agriculture, Paolo De Castro, to Head the EU Parliament's AG Committee.

Paolo De Castro, Italian Socialist politician and former Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies is selected

as chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development.

IT9021 – Italy Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards.

This report gives an overview of food laws currently in force in Italy and the EU-27.

IT9022 - Italy Urging EU to change the way Dairy Farmers do Business.

Italian Agriculture Minister Luca Zaia has been very vocal lately in support of EU and Italian dairy farmers, asking for labeling of origin for dairy products and financial support as compensation for dairy farmers in Europe who decide to quit the business.

IT9023 - Understanding Italian Cheese. Italy prides itself of being one of the world's leading cheese producers, with many different types of cheeses made from cow, goat, buffalo and sheep milk. There are currently 35 Italian cheeses that have the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) status under European Union regulations. Italian cheese production has fluctuated in recent years but there has been a general trend upwards and in the long term a relatively strong domestic demand and expansion into export markets such as Russia should keep the Italian cheese market afloat.